

Maui Jim's Maui Invitational

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Notre Dame Fighting Irish

Mike Brey

Postgame Press Conference

Texas A&M - 72, Notre Dame - 67

MIKE BREY: Just disappointing. We knew that Buzz's teams are going to come after you and when they really heated it up on us defensively in the second half we just didn't handle the pressure and got frazzled. That's what's disappointing. We kind of pride ourselves in being good with the ball, but they took us a little bit out of everything, and I think you got to credit their ball pressure. We had four guards on the floor a bunch of times and we still couldn't get to spots. They were tougher and especially the second 20 minutes and they deserved it.

Q. Texas A&M, what they do, is that hard under any circumstances and even harder on virtually no pressure?

MIKE BREY: Yeah, I mean, it's funny. I think this is the 15th time we've played. Buzz and I were talking about this in the hallway. And I have the utmost respect for him because we had to deal with him at Marquette and then Virginia Tech and their style is their style is their style. They really come at you.

And we handled it well for maybe 25 minutes, 28 minutes, and we just couldn't -- and it does take its toll. Eventually it's going to come and you're going to hold it off, or can you hold it off, and we couldn't. I feel for our guards because they're usually better with the ball, but tonight we couldn't help them much offensively. We gave up a bunch of layups. We were so good defensively in the first half and I think the tick, tick, tick of pressure, pressure, pressure, kind of broke us finally.

We're going to have to be better with the ball Monday night. I think that team plays some defense too. We got to go to Champaign, Illinois.

Q. Going off that question, is there any consideration to maybe expanding the lineup?

MIKE BREY: Yeah, I think you're always trying to look for another guy. Those seven have kind of earned it at this



point. But I think we're trying to get Elijah Taylor ready to go, another big body for Monday. He was trending the right way, then he had the flu and he was out and we're trying to get him in shape.

But really as far as the group that's going to either do it or not is, that group's going to have to do it, and the rest of the group there is really young. I'm thrilled with how Blake Wesley's coming along. This was the first Power Five game for him and he had 22-year-old guards after him. And I think overall he was pretty darn good and it was our older guards who struggled.

So again, like an Elijah Taylor, we have to get ready for this level of frontline guys. We need another big body and now that he's healthy we got to get him ready to be our eighth guy.

Q. Obviously frustrating week for you guys. You lose a tough game against Saint Mary's on Monday night, had a good second half against Chaminade, and today had the difficult second half. What are some positives you can now take away from this week and then how can you get your team ready to play Illinois and face steeper competition after that?

MIKE BREY: I know we gave up a bunch in the second half but I don't know if it was our defense. It was our turnovers that led to them scoring. I kind of like where we are defensively and really how we're rebounding the ball. We are rebounding the ball pretty good. We just got to figure out -- and I think we're still trying to figure out how to play off of Paul. He's given us an inside presence and what do we do around him and how do we use him.

And so I think we've got to stay with these defensive principles and try and figure out how to help us offensively a little bit more, especially when the pressure's ratcheted up. We're on the road for two in a row and then we got Kentucky at home. This was the first, this was the first experience with Power Five bodies, which these veteran guys who have played. Now, now here they come. And the athletic ability, it didn't hurt us on the backboard, which I'm always worried about. And it hurt us on some drives, but not enough that it should have beat us. It hurt us offensively because we couldn't maneuver in the second



half. Had some beautiful possessions for 25 minutes and then when they really ratcheted it up, they got us. And I know our older guards want to play better. Prentiss wants to play better, he's not playing as well, we need Prentiss, he's been pretty good for us and I got to figure out a way to help him over the next couple days to get him ready for Monday.

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